



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA Rural Development Value-Added Producer Grant Meetings in Tecumseh

Beatrice, Neb., Jan. 20, 2006 -Ag producers are encouraged to attend one of two informational meetings being held on February 9th to discuss value-added opportunities available via the Value-Added Producer Grant (VAPG) program. Meeting times are 3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.-8:00 p.m. Five Rivers Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development will host the meetings at the Five Rivers RC&D office in Tecumseh at 140 North 4th Street.

The meetings are highly recommended to agricultural producers, agricultural producer groups, farm and ranch cooperatives and majority controlled producer-based business ventures for use in value-added agriculture projects. Attendees will become familiar with the value-added program eligibility requirements and will be guided through the application process.

Value-added producer grants may be used to fund one of the following two: (1) planning activities needed to establish a viable value-added marketing opportunity for an agricultural product (e.g. conduct a feasibility study, develop a business or marketing plan); or (2) acquire working capital to operate a value-added business venture that will allow producers to better compete in domestic and international markets.

Statewide, value-added grants totaling \$1,113,540 assisted 16 producers in value-added ventures in Fiscal Year 2005. The 2002 Farm Bill made available monies for the USDA Rural Development VAPG program. Since the beginning of the program, Nebraska has received over \$7.7 million assisting in 54 value-added ventures.

For further information contact Deb Yocum, cooperative development specialist, USDA Rural Development, (402) 223-3125 x4, debra.yocum@ne.usda.gov or Howard McNiff, coordinator, Five Rivers RC&D, (402) 335-3347, howard.mcniff@ne.usda.gov.

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